



# **ELECTRICAL CURRENTS**

*Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector*

Ron Fuller, Chief Electrical Inspector

Vol. 6 No. 12

December 2003

## ● **Late Administrator and Electrician Renewals**

Each month we receive several letters to the Chief requesting relief from additional renewal fees or re-testing requirements for late renewals of electrician/administrator certificates. The governing certificate statutes are very clear; renew prior to your expiration date. The request will be automatically denied.

The legislature did not grant the department authority to waive this requirement and there is no avenue to appeal a decision to deny the request. If you are late and within 90 days of your expiration date, you must pay an additional late renewal fee. If more than 90 days have past, you must re-test to obtain a certificate.

To assist you with renewals, the department has printed change of address reminders on the back of your wallet certificate and sends a courtesy renewal notice to your last address of record 6 weeks prior to your renewal date. We have also made renewal easier. You can renew over the Internet with a credit card, through the mail, or at any of the 22 L&I service locations.

## ● **No slab or ditch cover without inspection.**

Electrical contractors and installers have been requesting slab and ditch cover approval without inspection. Cover approval cannot be granted except in emergency situations. Failure to call for an inspection in a timely fashion does not constitute an emergency. The local inspection supervisor must be made aware of and approve all emergency requests for slab and ditch cover.

## ● **Compliance Training For City Of Seattle Electrical Inspectors**

By request of the City of Seattle Mayor, the City electrical program has joined together with Labor & Industries to ensure safer installations and a more competitive marketplace for contractors through stringently enforcing licensing compliance. The City of Seattle inspectors have received the first round of training in licensing compliance activities. The City inspectors will be checking licenses and credentials on electrical installations and making referrals to the department when non-compliance activity is found. Qualified trained workers will inherently produce a safer installation. With better compliance enforcement, contractors bidding jobs in the City can count on competing in an equitable competitive environment. Seattle area contractors can expect to see department and city inspectors making joint jobsite visits as a continuation of the compliance training. We hope more local jurisdictions will join in working with the department in improving compliance efforts and improving the competitive advantage for legal contracting firms statewide.

## ● **How important is grounding?**

Las Vegas, Nevada – A tourist was electrocuted near a Las Vegas Strip casino during a weekend rainstorm. The tourist was walking across a median near the Treasure Island hotel-casino when she stepped on a wet traffic signal wiring box and collapsed. The victim was not wearing shoes. A worn wire inside the traffic box likely energized the cover of the box that was not effectively grounded. The victim was pronounced dead at a Las Vegas hospital.

## ● **Temporary Employment Firms – Requirements Under The Electrical Law**

At first glance labor pools who provide temporary electrical workers appear to be electrical contractors, however that is not always the case.

*Temporary employment firms that dispatch electricians to licensed electrical contractors.* The temporary employment firm is the employer of the individual for purposes other than chapter 19.28 RCW. The electrical contractor is the employer for the purposes of chapter 19.28 RCW (e.g. layout of

work, performance of work, supervision, etc.). The electrical contractor is responsible for the individual's work and must ensure the individual meets all requirements of chapter 19.28 RCW.

***Temporary employment firms that dispatch electricians to entities other than electrical contractors.***

Any firm that supplies electricians to entities other than licensed electrical contractors is acting as an electrical contractor. The firm must be a licensed electrical contractor meeting all the provisions of chapter 19.28 RCW. This includes: having a full-time electrical administrator or master electrician, obtaining permits/inspections, using only certified electricians, and otherwise meeting all the requirements of chapter 19.28 RCW for electrical contractors. The firm is the employer for the purposes of chapter 19.28 RCW (e.g. layout of work, performance of work, supervision, etc.). The firm is responsible for the individual's work and must ensure the individual from the temporary employment firm meets all requirements of chapter 19.28 RCW.

● **When Do Well Drillers And Pump Installers Need To Be Electrical Contractors?**

The 03A-Domestic Well specialty was created in 1998 at the request of the industry stakeholders. The department has agreed that well drilling, placement of a well pump, installation of conductors associated with the pump, and necessary water piping in the well casing is construction activity best regulated under chapter 18.27 RCW, Registration of Contractors. A registered contractor can perform this installation without becoming an electrical contractor if the electrical conductors supplying the pump and the wiring going down the well casing is left disconnected at the top of the wellhead.

A properly licensed electrical contractor must make the final electrical connection of those conductors at the top of the wellhead. An electrical contractor license and electrician certification is required to make the final connection and all other electrical work including electrical maintenance of the pump and all accessory equipment, wiring, conduit, etc. for pumps being installed new, maintained, or replaced.

A driller or pump installer registered under Chapter 18.27 RCW may temporarily connect a pump for testing from a portable generator with cord and plug output. These generators are typically 10 kw and smaller. Larger scale generating equipment typically involves electrical distribution and feeders, circuit hard wiring, overcurrent protection, and grounding safety issues.

Registered general contractors may advertise, bid, or subcontract electrical work that involves the connection of equipment they are allowed to install under their contractor registration; however, they cannot perform the electrical installation.

● **Electrical Exams**

LaserGrade will have newly revised exams available on January 1, 2004. The new examinations will be based on the current chapter 19.28 RCW and WAC 296-46B. These documents are posted on the Electrical Program website. See the November 2003 *Electrical Currents* for additional information.

● **Electrical Question of the Month**

**This Month's Question:** Electric heating appliances employing resistance-type heating elements rated more than \_\_\_\_ amperes shall have the heating elements subdivided. A) 60 B) 50 C) 48 D) 35

**Last Month's Question:** You are asked to investigate the failure of the electric radiant ceiling heating cable system in the living room of an apartment in an existing building. When you open the junction box for the line-voltage thermostat controlling the area, you see that the nonheating leads of the heating cable are blue. This heating cable is designed for a \_\_\_\_ volt system. A) 120, B) 208, C) 240, D) 277.  
The answer is: B) [NEC 424.35(2)]